



Speech By  
**Sandy Bolton**

**MEMBER FOR NOOSA**

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## **MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

### **Democracy**

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (2.58 pm): With urgency motions becoming the norm under the guise of efficiency, it appears politics is being prioritised over people. A letter to the editor of our local newspaper stated—

Democracy doesn't break overnight. It erodes slowly, every time a politician dodges a straight answer, every time a community is fobbed off, every time accountability is replaced with a theatrical performance.

There has never been a more instrumental time to replace politicking with real reform to decrease division and unrest occurring across communities around Australia. We can only do this by addressing our underpinning governance systems, as well the public sector, to ensure they are not the construct of the politics nor used to 'get the upper hand' over political rivals. However, as I have learned, it is the politics not people who determine whether flaws are fixed. This raises the question why those who govern do not want to fix them.

The Premier, responding to my request for an independent inquiry into an upper house or suitable alternative as a pathway to end the dysfunctions of our parliament, said it was not a priority for Queenslanders. That is understandable, as we seek quick relief, and commitments to fix the system itself do not fit easily into a slogan nor are as vote grabbing as addressing the symptoms themselves. Yet, ultimately, if the system itself is not sorted we will continue the same same, the blame, the seesawing, the tit for tatting, the inefficiencies and the wasted taxpayer dollars that have become the norm. Major issues will remain unresolved and unsustainable, whether housing or hospitals, energy or insurance premiums, without instrumental change and that is regardless of who is in government. As I said last sitting, how can any government unlock land for housing but not incorporate the genuine affordable housing that is the greatest need?

Effective systems do not see announcements without consultation nor details as occurred regarding the proposed Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority. Why add another level of expensive bureaucracy when what is needed are more resources on the ground to manage our waterways. Effective systems do not see six years to resolve the lease for Noosa Hospital so they can expand their emergency department to reduce ambulance ramping at SCUH, nor for volunteers to get what is needed such as interpretive signage the Friends of Kinaba have been seeking for 15 years—15 years! Effective systems would not close the Noosa Dental Clinic, with the need so great that waitlists are many months long and vouchers are used to refer to other clinics. We need a dental chair increase, not closure. In relation to the Noosa North Shore airfield, there has been no response from the minister to our request to extend the temporary use period for recreational clubs needed as the government did not do as they said they would nor have they provided community consultation data requested since June last year or ensured the working group operated as requested and promised by the previous government.

Effective systems would not see issues raised by communities and their MPs for years ignored, with any type of action only after endless outrage once it becomes an overwhelming crisis. Housing and illegal e-bikes are just two of many examples. The reality is that both could have been nipped in the bud when first raised. Disengagement and disillusionment were once associated with the rise of extreme movements. However, they have been spreading into everyday households driven by a loss of faith in our systems and major political parties. Queenslanders will act if they feel ignored by governments, with Australia Institute research showing increasing support for minor parties and independents for several decades. The question we should all be asking is: how far are we from the tipping point?

In 2024 the Public Sector Commission was authorised to act independently to provide frank and fearless advice driven by a commitment to efficiency, ethics and delivering outcomes for Queenslanders. To prevent the failings we continue to see, we need the commission to do exactly that. As well, we need reform of our parliament to ensure transparency, accountability and representation, to become effective and efficient, to deliver more and to address expectations. There is that old saying, 'If you keep doing the same thing you will keep getting the same results.' I again respectfully ask this government to be bold. Now is an incredible opportunity to end the seesawing and waste. Make remedying the wrongs a 2028 election commitment as it is very much a matter of public interest and importance.